

The Society for Academic Primary Care: Position Statement April 2011

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Enhancing primary care through academic excellence

The Society for Academic Primary Care (SAPC) exists to support, promote, and develop the discipline of Academic Primary Care. This unique discipline brings together teachers, researchers, and practitioners from a range of disciplinary backgrounds to promote excellence in the development, delivery, and evaluation of primary care policy and practice.

The Society's work is underpinned by three key principles:

- **PROMOTING** excellent teaching, research, and critical reflection on primary care practice and policy
- **VALUING** a distinctive primary care approach
- recognising the importance of a **MULTIDISCIPLINARY** membership to achieve our goals.

What is primary care?

Primary care refers to a complex set of ideas about how we understand, deliver, experience, and value health and health care.

Primary care refers to the way in which health care is *organised*: a multidimensional system of care shaped by financial, governance, and workforce arrangements; facilitating coordinated and continuous access to a range of services; contributing to the equitable distribution of health in the population through the efficient application of resources.

Primary care refers to the *experience* of care for individuals: being people's first point of contact with health services; providing accessible, comprehensive, and continuous care; providing treatment for common illnesses, supporting the management of long-term conditions, and contributing to

prevention of future ill-health. An important role is to co-ordinate the care of people with multiple morbidities.

Primary care also refers to a *philosophy* of care: offering a generalist approach, caring for people rather than specific diseases; emphasising a patient advocacy role negotiating complexity of care over extended periods; recognising the importance of interpersonal relationships; supporting health as a resource for living.

What is Academic Primary Care?

Academic Primary Care is a distinct scientific discipline contributing to the understanding and delivery of the primary health care concept through: articulating the values and body of knowledge that informs and develops practice; disseminating and developing the models through teaching and through a process of continual learning; and studying the implementation, evaluation, and impact of current policy and strategy.

Reflecting on the complexity of the primary care task, primary care academics come from a range of disciplines and use multiple approaches to critically explore, evaluate, and develop the understanding of illness and delivery of care.

What does SAPC do to support Academic Primary Care

SAPC provides a forum to share information and ideas through: organising national and regional scientific meetings; supporting communication through the website, newsletters, and these discussion pages.

SAPC represents and promotes the work of Academic Primary Care on a number of key bodies related to research and education; and builds links with organisations reflecting the multidisciplinary nature of the discipline (see www.sapc.ac.uk).

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What does SAPC do for its individual members?

A key priority for the organisation is in supporting individual members through: regular communications with the Society; supporting dialogue between members and with external groups; promoting networking opportunities through provision of a member directory, online discussion opportunities, and discussions at regional and national

scientific meetings. Members receive discounted conference rates and journal subscriptions. We support the work of Special Interest Groups bringing together people with like-minded interests and providing opportunities for collaborative learning and development.

Go to www.sapc.ac.uk to see a full version of this statement, and to leave your thoughts and comments on our discussion board.